

***EXHIBIT D***

My name is Dahn Shaulis. My public comment is about the future of the Nevada Department of Corrections and the State of Nevada. I was an employee in the Nevada Department of Corrections from 2000 to 2007 and am currently an instructor at the College of Southern Nevada where I have taught correctional classification and sociology. Prior to my state service I received my Ph.D. in sociology from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I have spent considerable time observing and analyzing the justice system in Nevada. These are my observations and recommendations.

1. From the mid 1960s to the present, the State of Nevada has chosen to imprison people at the expense of dealing with the root causes of crime: economic injustice, ignoring mental health concerns, casinos, and the war on drugs.
2. By spending on prisons rather than public education, mental health care, and drug rehabilitation, the State has found itself in a 40-year cycle of mass incarceration.
3. Mass incarceration and fear of crime have been used as political and economic tools for politicians and judges, winning conservative votes and creating an unhealthy form of rural development.
4. During my service in NDOC, I saw a department that could not adequately deal with mass incarceration, and have personally observed or received credible information on waste, fraud, abuse, mismanagement, and patterns of sexual harassment.
5. The last Nevada prison budget was based on the premise that prison growth would increase 61% in the next ten years, to 22,000 inmates by 2017.
6. The NDOC, however, has seen an 18% drop in its women's prison population since 2007 and a 3% drop in its men's prison populations since 2008.
7. NDOC and some government officials have had a vested interest in generating fear about public safety.
8. As we develop a future vision of Nevada, there are effective ways to simultaneously downsize prisons and improve public safety. Failure to plan comprehensively could result in what Jeffrey Reiman calls a "pyrrhic defeat", that is NDOC and some government officials will benefit if crime or the fear of crime increases.
9. Credible information and guidance on downsizing prisons has been available for years but has largely been ignored by the State of Nevada. One good source is Michael Jacobson's book, **Downsizing Prisons: How to Reduce Crime and End Mass Incarceration** published in 2005. Mr. Jacobson was the budget director for NY City before becoming head of probation and corrections.

Recommendations:

1. The NDOC budget is unsustainable. State monies must go into investment of its people, particularly in the form of public education. I would suggest that NDOC carefully look at salaries, benefits, and work schedules of its managers before reducing the salaries and benefits of prison staffers, including administrative aides and those who have more interaction with prisoners.
2. The 2007 study by **Justice Center of the Council of State Governments** titled **Increasing Public Safety, Generating Savings**, provides us with some clear initial guidelines on downsizing prisons and improving cooperation between various agencies. I would like to know what the State of Nevada and NDOC have done to implement these guidelines.
3. The Justice Center study also points us in the direction of more thoughtful and courageous strategies that could help Nevada's future.
4. As the report states "any strategy to reduce crime and manage the growth of prison population should focus on improving conditions in the neighborhoods (where) a disproportionate number of offenders will likely return."
5. These plans should include investment in education and decent work opportunities in areas that have typically been ignored or damaged by governments and businesses. There should be clear indicators and benchmarks for progress in improving conditions in these neighborhoods. Public officials should be held accountable to help improve the quality of life in these neighborhoods.

**Forwarded to the following organizations,  
so that they know about this letter's  
contents, to:**

CURE Nevada  
P.O. Box 467  
Yerington, Nevada, 89447

ACLU of Nevada, Reno Office  
1325 Airmotive Way, Suite 202  
Reno, Nevada 89502

Amnesty USA  
Western Office  
350 Sansome St, Ste 210  
San Francisco, CA 94104

Human Rights Watch  
11500 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 441  
Los Angeles, CA 90064 USA

AFSC  
National Office  
Healing Justice program  
1501 Cherry Street,  
Philadelphia, PA 19102